not use household equipment in their games. Instead they find broken dishes, old cans, and other discarded items in the trash heap. Children do

The kitchen has no equipment other than the open fireplace with three hearth stones and a shelf above it on which a salt column, symbolizing kitchen deities, is kept. During the last few years, the Ryukyan government Home Extension Service has been trying to introduce brick stoves into farmhouses. Several families now have this kind of stove although it is expensive to build.

As far as can be superficially discerned, the home is kept clean. A visitor usually finds the floor of the house free of dirt. Footgear is taken off before entering, and children are reminded to wash their bare feet before going into the house. Less care is given to the area around the kitchen.

Outside the kitchen stand one or two jars to store water. A dipper is kept nearby, and children playing in the vicinity or adults often walk to one of these jars for water, which they drink out of a dipper. There may also be an array of pots, pans, crates, baskets, and other equipment piled up around the kitchen. Knives and hatchets are openly left around among the equipment behind the kitchen.

The courtyard is an important place for domestic activities. Here women and girls wash dishes, mix pig food in large kettles, make bean paste in a hand stone grinder, and prepare grain for storage. There are vegetable patches in one corner of the yard, chicken coops, pigsties, goat pens, and an outhouse in another. Most garbage is fed to the pigs; the rest is thrown over the sea wall to roll down onto the beach.

* * *

Chapter 2

Daily Routine

There are few clocks in central Taira. Except for the township office, post office, and village store, only two or three families own a timepiece. Twice a day, at noon and 10 o'clock in the evening, a clerk strikes

But actually no family is entirely self-sufficient, for each needs to purchase foodstuff as well as ready-made clothes, manufactured mostly in Japan, more substantial building materials, such as better grades of wood, tiles, and cement, tobacco, alcoholic beverages, sweets, toilet articles, some medical supplies, and other luxuries. Farmers buy their tools; students their books and writing materials. Finally, cash is needed to pay taxes.

In addition to the utilization of sugar, pineapple, firewood, and building materials for cash, Tairans also raise pigs for sale to slaughter houses, and some families derive an income from raising silkworms and producing tea. Fishermen sell fish inside and outside the village, and a small group of people are salaried workers or have an income from specialized services.

Village leaders fear dependence on rapidly dwindling forest resources, still the main source of ready cash. They realize that the present modest living conditions of all families could be much improved if Tairans concentrated on increasing the cultivation of subsistence crops and farmed more intensively to raise cash crops. Most people lack this insight, however, and live on a day-to-day basis without much thought of the future. This is an island-wide problem which has the attention of central government agencies, and a great deal of educational propaganda comes to the village through government channels.

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The productivity of the land varies not only with its quality but also with the industriousness of the owners. Farmers who show foresight, those who seem to be under less pressure for immediate cash, take off more time from forest work to cultivate fields during planting season. The village headman and council members remind everybody during village meetings and informal discussions that work in the fields should not be neglected. With the approval of the whole community, the first and 15th of each lunar month have been set aside for farming. On these two days it is forbidden to go to the forests to cut wood. Such agreements are usually observed (as a rule), and they help to achieve their purpose but are not completely effective.

Rice is planted and harvested twice a year. The first rice is prepared in January when seeds are put into special beds where they are left to grow into young shoots until March. Until about 30 years ago it was said that all people seeded rice on the same day while prayers were

Since

621 several finance groups are formed simultaneously in the village, and
452 an individual may belong to more than one, this system can create
474 more problems for the community than it helps to redress. Village leaders therefore think that the cooperative could take over the loan functions at low interest rates more effectively.

433 Concern about improving village economy is genuine and foremost.
621 Since the whole island has common economic problems, many sug-
[654] gestions for developing sound village economy originate from the central government. There are many associations and movements which all aim at the same result. Their number is staggering and bewildering to the outsider. In Taira, concern for improvement of conditions is a program of the Women's Association and the Home Improvement Group, associations who try to introduce such changes as better stoves, making of bean paste by villagers, and saving during feasts. There is also an Agricultural Promotion Association which is concerned with improvement of agricultural practices, promotion of cash crops, and
[474] reduction of forest work. All these organizations, along with the cooperative and the village government, work together. An individual may be a member of several. Persons with enough knowledge and experience to assume responsible positions are limited in number, and the same persons appear as leaders in various groups. This puts a heavy burden on them, since few days pass during which their attendance after work is not required at one meeting or another.

Taira assumed a leading position in the township in improving agricultural and general economy, especially by promoting sugar development, pineapple growing, and tea raising in recent years. Mean-
154 while, low income and general poverty are a constant concern to every-
571 body but do not seem to result in constant anxiety. Security, as will be pointed out in other contexts, is provided by being a member of the kinship group and, in the wider sense, of the village as a whole. This helps to share burdens and thus reduce their weight.

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

quire room and board are sometimes put up without compensation, and they agree, perhaps, to give some help with studies of the landlord's children. Only the village "doctor" takes transient guests, mostly visiting officials from the city, who pay for lodgings.

Although the household head is a legal owner of the family property, there is a feeling that it belongs to the family and everyone in the household identifies himself with his land and house. This is expressed in the language. A person who is asked, "Whose rice paddy is this?" would answer that it is the household's or "ours."

In addition to the communal land holdings and the property of the cooperative described earlier, the following items are shared. The government supplies a breeding boar to each village; it is then left in the care of one farmer. This animal is available to pig owners for studding on request, and a small charge is made for the upkeep of the boar. A few tools are jointly owned by several households. Threshing machines were bought jointly after the war by two or more families to defray the high cost of such equipment. These families could be neighbors or relatives. Today many are complaining that joint ownership works hardships during the busy harvest season when there is heavy demand for the machines. As a result, everybody wishes to own his own machine as soon as he can afford to. For tea harvesting, special clippers are owned by the village cooperative and loaned to people as they need them. Since tea harvesting, though seasonal, is not done by all families during the same day, sharing of these tools presents no difficulties.

Property of others is very much respected. Stealing among villagers is almost unheard of, except for some pilfering of green vegetables and fruits by children. Only one case was reported during the field-work period—a person tried to take some goods without payment from the community store. When a village meeting was called, and it was announced that the person's identity was known to the store manager, the merchandise was later replaced. Willful damage to fields is similarly strictly forbidden. No child would really think of doing such damage. But there are no formal rules about trespassing. Movement across other people's property is completely free and unchallenged.

military competes with sugar as a primary cash crop, and cane fields are being converted back to rice paddies as fast as the farmer's resources permit. A more detailed discussion of the crop changes in the last two or three decades follows. 175 241 178 433

Chronology of Change in Crops The major changes in crops revolve chiefly around the replacement of rice as a cash crop by sugar cane, and the later reversal of this situation. About fifty years ago, rice was the chief cash crop. It was rarely consumed in the home, but was sold in order to meet the monetary expenses of taxes, and to buy occasionally the new commodities that were beginning to appear in the markets. Then, not long after the Russo-Japanese war had ended, the price of black sugar jumped almost overnight from ¥8.50 to ¥64 for a 150-'kin' barrel. Everyone wanted to get a share of this boom in sugar, and most began to convert paddy land into 'hatake' for the growing of cane. They were stuck with the 'hatake' when the price fell after two months. The Japanese subsidized sugar later, however, and most of the land that had been converted remained sugar land. [654]

When the people began returning to their farms more than a year after the end of World War II hostilities, there was little market for sugar. The subsidy had gone with defeat, and providentially the sugar lands were available for the growing of more sweet potatoes. American canned food and sweet potatoes were the main items of diet until about 1949. Gradually farmers began to convert 'hatake' to paddy fields, and to grow rice again---this time less for sale than for home consumption. [262] [177]

The old "bearded rice" varieties (fijimē and mēdakōja) of the nineteenth century were replaced gradually by the shorter-statured but higher-yielding 'hōraimai'. The bearded rice, planted only once a year, had a yield of about one-third the present variety, and had only five or six stalks per plant. The twice a year modern variety yields more and has on the average fourteen to fifteen stalks per plant. As a result of the adoption of the two-crop variety, at least one traditional ceremony was abandoned. This was the tantui, in which the whole village participated before simultaneously planting their seedbeds. Before the war, two-thirds of Okinawa's rice requirements were imported.[1] Indicative of the postwar change to rice are the figures for area of paddy-fields in Kochinda-son; the 114,142 'tsubo' of paddy in February of 1948 had increased to 306,220 'tsubo' by September of 1952. Field investigation proved that conversion to paddy has proceeded at least as fast since 1952 as it did prior to that date. 175 241 433 243 178

Before the First World War almost everyone in Nanahan raised forty to fifty 'tsubo' of millet. It was boiled with glutinous rice to make millet rice-cakes, or 'awamochi'. None is raised now. The same is true of cotton. "It grew only a foot high, but its fiber was very strong and would last a lifetime." Some other crops lasted into the post-war period. Until about 1950 textile bananas and yams were raised in Nanahan, but they both proved to be too weak in typhoons, and their cultivation was abandoned. 178 175 241 [252]

[1] Summation....July-November 1946, p. 25.